

Department of Justice High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project *Denver, Colorado*



Addressing Interoperability

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Wireless Management Office (WMO) has been working toward improving long-term federal interagency communications across the Nation. As an interim step, and as a response to a request from the House/Senate CJS Appropriations Subcommittee staff, the DOJ WMO has been leading the High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project to provide targeted cities with basic and immediate interagency communications capabilities among local, state, and federal agencies during emergency response. Twenty-five cities were selected by criteria including perceived risk and population size. As stakeholders in 1 of the 25 cities, Denver metropolitan area local, state, and federal public safety agencies have been working collaboratively with the DOJ WMO to address basic interoperable communications.

Participating Agencies

Partnership among Denver area local, state, and federal public safety agencies has been instrumental in the development of comprehensive interoperability solution sets. Participating agencies have included—

- Arapahoe County
- Arvada City
- Aurora City
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)
- City of Denver
- Colorado National Guard
- Colorado State Patrol
- Denver County
- Denver International Airport
- Drug Enforcement Administration
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Lakewood City
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Marshals Service (USMS)
- U.S. Secret Service
- Westminster City

Key Successes

DOJ and area stakeholders successfully achieved basic interoperability and emergency response communications improvements in the Denver metropolitan area through the implementation of three interoperability solutions. The solutions support the use of existing, disparate interoperability and communications systems by extending coverage, capacity, and availability to more public safety agencies. Additionally, in the course of meeting this project's interoperability goals, stakeholders were able to foster a working relationship among federal agencies and local and state agencies to resolve interoperability issues for the area.

The first solution provides additional agencies access to the statewide Project-25, Digital Trunked Radio (DTR) network. DTR is composed of partnerships among local, state, and federal agencies. This joint radio system supports public safety agencies using one seamless network. DTR control stations were connected to the radio systems of Arvada/Westminster, Aurora, and Denver International Airport. These control stations give dispatcher and field user access to all DTR radio users. A cache of DTR portable radios was also provided to three federal agencies (ATF, FBI, and USMS) to support on-scene communications with other first responders operating on the DTR system.

The second solution expands the capacity of the Lakewood Police Department's fixed audio switch network by linking one additional audio switch to the two existing switches. This enhancement allows dispatchers to patch together multiple talk groups for agencies to communicate while using their own agency's radio system.

To respond to incident scenes not accessible using existing interoperability resources, a new 4x4 mobile communications vehicle was provided to the Denver Police Department. This vehicle is available for interagency short- and long-term emergency responses. The mobile platform provides agencies operating within



their own system's coverage area with a link to radio users of disparate, out-of-band systems. It can also act as a temporary site to provide communications for radio users outside their own system's coverage area.

In support of these solutions, DOJ worked with the Rocky Mountain Enhanced Digital Access Communications System (EDACS) User Group to identify state and federal participants to join local agency members. This collaborative effort resulted in the development of standard operating procedures to address rules of use for channel patching and mobile resource deployment. The committee continues to meet to discuss interoperability efforts in the Denver metropolitan area.

Moving Forward

The cooperation and support between participating agencies and DOJ WMO provided short-term scalable solutions designed to give additional agencies future access to the interoperability solutions. Sustained operations, maintenance, and support of these interoperability solutions will be coordinated by key stakeholders. These efforts, along with the City of Denver's long-term interoperability plans to build a shared communications system, will ensure continuity in addressing interoperable communications among public safety agencies in the Denver metropolitan area.

Contact Information

If you would like to know more about this initiative and the interoperability solutions, please contact—

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